

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. I.

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No. 12

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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THE LOVE OF GOD.

At first I prayed for light. Could I but see the
way,
How gladly would I walk to everlasting day!
I asked the world's deep law before my eyes to
ope,
And let me see my prayer fulfilled, and realized
my hope.
But God was kinder than my prayer,
And darkness veiled me everywhere.

And next I asked for strength, that I might tread
the road,
With firm, unflinching pace to heaven's serene
abode;
That I might never know a faltering, failing
heart,
But manfully go on, and reach the highest part.
But God was kinder than my prayer,
And weakness checked me everywhere.

And then I prayed for faith. Could I but trust
my God,
I'd live in heavenly peace, though foes were all
abroad.
His light thus shining round, no faltering should
I know;
And faith in heaven above would make a heaven
below.
But God was kinder than my prayer,
And doubts beset me everywhere.

And now I pray for love, deep love to God and
man,—
A love that will not fail, however dark his plan;
That sees all life in him, rejoicing in his power,
And faithful, though the darkest clouds of gloom
and doubt may lower.
And God is kinder than my prayer,
Love fills and blesses everywhere.

—*Ednah D. Cheney.*

HOW SOULS GROW.

The philosophers tell us that "on earth there is nothing greater than man, and in man there is nothing greater than mind." Victor Hugo says, "There is one thing grander than the sea,—that is the sky; and one thing grander than sea or sky,—that is the interior of a human soul." The starry heavens and the moral sentiment in man appeared to Immanuel Kant as the two supreme grandeurs of the creative universe.

But the highest outcome of creation, so far as we know, is not merely man, but the *best* man, or man at his best. For our human kind appears in all stages of development, reaching from the low level of the brute up to those summits of wisdom and goodness and power where the common mind enthrones and adores its deities. Indeed, the deification of great men is the unconscious testimony of the race to its own ideals and possibilities. But the noblest and loftiest began their earthly life in the weakness of infancy, began in embryonic cells which no science can distinguish from those of beast or fish or reptile. Between the highest and lowest forms of life there is an unbroken connection; for the highest all originate in the lowest. Sage, seer, saint, or Saviour, they were all born as helpless babes, they all lay hidden once in primal germs, they are all the products of long, slow growth; and at some stage of their intelligence and virtue they must have passed the way stations at which we have arrived.

"The development of a soul! little else is worth study," exclaims Robert Browning. Is it possible to trace these processes of spiritual evolution, to note the stages through which this apparent child of earth unfolds into a child of heaven?

Two things we must take for granted,—an adequate Power behind evolution, and a provision for growth in the original nature

of the growing being. The future bird is provided for in the egg, the future oak in the acorn: every creature grows from a seed of its own kind, and all which is to be unfolded was first infolded. If heavenly life or heavenly destiny is possibly ours, the seed of heavenly character must have been planted in our being, and must appear as the orderly outcome of our faculties and life principles. This may only be another way of saying that our life is a share of the original and eternal life which is hidden within these unpromising germs. Did Jesus see this when he looked on the little ones and said, "Of such is the kingdom"?

Yet it is also clear that this primal spiritual nature, like any other germ, must grow, must find favorable conditions for growth, and may be checked or perverted in its growth by unfavorable conditions without or within. Only through *orderly* growth can cell or seed or soul ever reach its true destiny.

"There is first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual." The earlier manifestations of our life are mostly like those of animals.

We begin with a creature closely resembling an animal,—a creature whose body is nearly all there is of him: we go on to produce a creature whose body is the least important part, and is, finally, no part at all. But between these two states what has taken place? The body, which has its rights and uses, has persistently sought to maintain its early supremacy: the unfolding spirit has persistently struggled for dominion over the flesh,—over heredity and environment. The struggle itself is a creative process: it is the method of development. Not more real is the formation and growth of a bird within the egg-shell than is this unfolding of a spirit-organism in man. His intelligence does not stop where animal intelligence stops: it cannot content itself with merely preserving the physical existence of itself and its successors. It unfolds into a marvellous and many-sided faculty, which distinguishes good from evil, right from wrong, truth from error, beauty from deformity,—a faculty, also, of seeing what is good for others and good for all mankind; a faculty for directing energy to ideal and purely spiritual ends, even at the sacrifice of all material interests; a faculty which looks backward,

and draws wisdom from the history of a thousand generations, and forward with hopes that stretch into endlessness. Thus does man emerge from infancy, rise into the moral order, become consciously a living soul, salute himself as a partaker of the divine nature, and feel that he is being prepared for a superhuman destiny and companionship. May we now try to note the evidences or signs of soul-growth, or, rather, try to forecast what we may look forward to if we patiently continue in well-doing?

1. Increasing clearness of moral perception, or a better reading of the law written in the heart. For the mind of man is a statute-book: within himself is set up a throne of judgment. He finds there a standard by which he is self-approved or self-condemned; and the light that lighteth every man shines with increasing brightness, if he follows its leading.

2. Increasing power of self-direction and of self-compulsion. This follows from subjecting body to spirit, impulse to reason. In some very large and real sense, man becomes free and "master of his fate,"—free at least to choose between several motives when he sees that one is nobler than the others. As Goethe says, "Man always has power to enforce his own convictions upon himself." As George Eliot sings,—

"I will be liege, not of my birth alone,
But of the good I have discerned and chosen."

3. Increasing mastery of environment or indifference to it. The growing soul feels itself less and less at the mercy of circumstances, less and less dependent on the support of external authorities and institutions, more and more able to utilize them and learn from them, surer and surer that all things work for good, finding God in all, and all in God.

4. Increasing identification with the whole of humanity. As "the higher life" begins for us when we renounce our own wills before a divine law,"—or, rather, when our wills are identified with that law,—so we advance in that higher life by merging our private interest in the universal welfare. "Man, in his infancy, thinks that all creation was formed for him," says Bulwer; but, as heart and horizon are enlarged together, no man wishes to live for himself, and the whole human race

comes to be looked on as part of a larger whole,—one block to be fitted for its place in the temple-wall. As the spirit emancipates itself through divine struggles from the tyranny of the flesh, so also does it burst the narrow shell of selfishness, and rise into a self-love which is in harmony with the love of God and man.

5. Consciousness of increasing inward resources. Here the New Testament tells the whole story, as modern science also does, in one great word, "Life!" "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." Conscious sonship to God may well be accepted as a pledge of all the universe has to give. He that drinketh of *this* water, "it shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." The primitive disciples revelled in the belief that by sharing such life as their Master's they would gain access to unsearchable riches, to all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God. No ecstacy of fanaticism, no dream of Illuminism or Perfectism, ever went further; yet who shall set any limit to the possible growth of a soul,—that is, to the generosity of the Soul of souls?

Ah! if only we may learn to depend on such resources, should we ever faint under the daily burdens? Should we ever despair of the soul's victory over weakness, folly, or sin? Should we ever be perilously lifted up by prosperity or praise, or too sadly cast down by adversity or reproach? And what other help or salvation can we covet for ourselves or for our fellow-men than this inward unfolding and expansion of a life which has its perpetual root and supply in the Eternal Cause of All?

For surely there can be but one rational explanation of this whole business of soul-growth, "We are his offspring." Our being is continually derived, and that being is occupied and preoccupied with God. Our consciousness is the witness of the Real Presence: because He lives, we live also. His image or likeness is formed within us as a consciousness of freedom and an endowment of personality,—a gift never so completely ours as when we make it completely his by oneness of will and by "the faith that makes faithful."

What we call unbelief, then, is really

inertia or blindness,—a partial stupor or non-use of our nobler faculties. As soon as a man is wide awake, his eyes open and discovery begins. He becomes aware that he is not all body: he feels the unbidden stir of deep and high instincts of reverence, dependence, mystery, trust, duty, expectation, outreaching and upreaching fellowship. For soul-growth brings with it capacity for self-companionship or peopled solitude, and for companionship with the Father and all his family.

And, if such life be what we are made for, we shall grow into it as naturally as plants grow from seeds: we shall grow, unless hindered. As we have seen, there may be external and ancestral hindrances; but for most of us the more serious hindrances are within. Our cowardice, falseness, indifference; our conformity to customs and traditions which smother life; our absorption in the cares of the world, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life"; and our half-hearted obedience to the still, small Voice,—these things, and such as these, keep us in a state of arrested development or produce all shapes of deformity. How many of us suffer a vague uneasiness, a shadow of self-reproach, an unsatisfied longing, a sense of inconsistency and contradiction, as if trying to serve two masters, without loyalty to either! The mind dwells in a cloud that opens and shuts, so that now we catch glimpses of our truer selves and the better life, and now we lose the vision, and fall into doubt if there be such realities as spiritual truth or goodness, as divine Fatherhood or human brotherhood.

Let us make soul-culture, through simple self-fidelity, our chief object and industry. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments": follow the light that shows the upward path.

Patience, O Soul! The seed of spiritual being is a live seed: the quickening Power ministers to it, even in the darkness and cold. It is sown in weakness, dishonor, corruption: it is to be raised in power, glory, immortality.

"Be docile to thine unseen Guide:

Love him as he loves thee.

Time and obedience are enough,

And thou a saint shalt be."

C. G. AMES.

THE STILL HOUR.

—
"He first loved us."

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew

He moved my soul to it who sought for me:

It was not I that found, O Saviour true;

No, I was found of thee.

Thou didst reach forth thy hand and mine enfold;

I walked, and sank not on the storm-vexed sea;

But not so much that I on thee took hold

As by thy hold of me.

I find, I walk, I love; but, ah! the whole

Of love is but my answer, Lord, to thee:

Lord, thou wert long beforehand with my soul,—

Always thou lovedst me.

—*Holy Songs.*

Father, we thank thee that amid the joys of the flesh, amid the delights of our daily work, and all the sweet and silent blessedness of mortal friendship and love upon the earth, thou givest us the joy of knowing thee, the still and calm delight of lying low in thy hand, and feeling the breath of thy spirit upon us. Yea, Lord, we thank thee that thou holdest each one of us, yea, all of thy children, and the universe itself, as a mother folds her baby to her bosom, and blestest us all with thine infinite loving-kindness and thy tender mercy.

The sun drinks in the dew which casts back its rays, and God absorbs the soul which reflects him.—*Joseph Roux.*

There is no holiness if thou, Lord, withdraw thy presence; no wisdom profiteth if thy Spirit cease to direct; no strength availeth without thy support; no chastity is safe without thy protection; no watchfulness effectual when thy holy vigilance is not on guard. No sooner are we left to ourselves than the waves of corruption rush upon us, and we sink; but, if thou reach forth thy omnipotent hand, we walk upon the sea. In our own nature we are unsettled as the sand upon the mountain; but in thee we have the stability of the throne of heaven. We are cold and insensible as darkness and death, but are kindled into light and life by the fire of thy love.

O Lord, my God, who hast mercifully numbered me among the objects of thy redeeming love, thou art my glory and my joy, my hope and refuge in the day of my distress. But my love is yet feeble, and my holy resolutions imperfect: do thou, therefore, visit me continually, and instruct me out of thy law; deliver me from malignant passions and sensual desires, that, being healed and purified, I may love with more ardor, suffer with more patience, and persevere with more constancy.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

O God, when shall we return love for Love? When shall we turn toward Him who is ever seeking us, and whose arms are ever around us? It is while resting on thy paternal bosom that we forget thee. The sweetness of thy gifts make us forget the Giver. The blessings we every moment receive from thee, instead of touching our hearts, turn our thoughts away from thee. Thou art the source of all true pleasures. Thy creatures are only the gross channels through which they flow to us, and the stream has made us forget the fountain-head. This infinite love follows us everywhere, and we are ever trying to escape from it: it is everywhere, and we do not perceive it. We call ourselves alone when we have only God with us. He does all for us, and we do not trust in him: we despair when we have no other resource than his providence, and count for nothing infinite love and infinite power.—*Fénelon (A.D. 1651-1715).*

All day long my God is moved with compassion. Since the beginning of the world not one sigh has ever lost its way between heaven and earth. If once I belong to God, he will prepare for me whatever is best. I may ask everything. God has told me so. I have the liberty to desire. I have equal confidence in trusting my death to God as in submitting my life to him. From that moment I have peace, God knows what I wish. If it is good for me, he will give it to me.—*Countess de Gasparin.*

The years of God are full and satisfying. Each soul shall have its turn: it is his good pleasure to give us the kingdom. There is so much room, there are such thronging possibilities, there is such endless hope!—*A. D. T. Whitney.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.]

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GIVERS AND RECEIVERS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

[The title of the book "In His Name" used in the above notice in previous numbers of this paper has been misunderstood to be a password of the Cheerful Letter Exchange. It was the interesting little book by Dr. E. E. Hale, which we took as an example, supposing that most of our readers were familiar with it, by name at least.]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

The *Household*, the *Unitarian*, and the *Christian Register* for 1893, also six bound volumes of the *Christian Examiner*, are offered by Mrs. Wm. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

Any one wishing "God's Image in Man," Henry Wood; "As it is in Heaven," Lucy Larcom; "Christian Secret of a Happy Life," Mrs. H. W. Smith; "Daily Strength for Daily Needs," M. W. Tileston, address N. S. Bond, 933 Main Street, Waltham, Mass.

Miss M. Very, Exeter Chambers, Exeter Street, Boston, Mass., will be glad to remail her copy of *Unity*, after reading it, to any lonely reader.

"Day of Judgment," Brooke Herford; "Religion its own Evidence," George Batchelder; "Address on Temperance," William E. Channing, D.D.; "Religious Education of Children," C. F. Dole; "Unitarian Belief stated in Bible Language," J. C. Parsons; "Blessings on the Day," W. C. G.; "Siberian Toboggan Slide"; "Temperance: The New View"; "How to Die," M. J. Savage; "How shall I Live?" K. G. W.; "Church-going, Past, Present, Future," J. F. Clarke; "Word of God," William P. Tilden; "Temperance Work in Unitarian Churches: Why? What? How?" by Christopher R. Eliot; "Our Common Christianity," Arthur P. Stanley, Dean of Westminster; *Christian Register* for 1891-92,—offered by Miss Grace Marion Prue, West Acton, Mass.

I will give and send the following books: "Sermons for the People," Huntington; "Doctrines of Christianity," Eliot; "She" and "King Solomon's Mines," Rider Haggard. Address Miss M. E. French, Kenosha, Wis., Box 637.

"I have a year of the *North American Review* which I will send to any one desiring it. As it is not light reading, it will not appeal to all; but it is excellent matter for good minds." Address Mrs. G. H. Robinson, 339 West 57th Street, New York.

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch of the Cheerful Letter Exchange. In applying for them, address Mrs. William Cook, 71 Appleton Street, Cambridge, Mass. "Almost a Heroine," E. Berger; "Allan Quatermain," Rider Haggard; "The Armorer's Prentices," Charlotte M. Yonge; "At Odds," author of "Quits"; "Alice Lorraine," R. D. Blackmore; "Attila," G. P. R. James; "The Arundel Motto," Mary Cecil Hay; "Black Beauty"; "The Book of Perfumes," Er-

nest Rimmel; "The Children's Friend"; "The Course of Time," Poem in Six Books; "Castle-builders," Miss Yonge; "Craddock Noel," R. D. Blackmore; "Cripps, the Carrier," R. D. Blackmore; Chardenal's "First French Course"; Collet's "French Dialogues"; "Debit and Credit," from the German of G. Bunsen; "The Dutchman's Fireside"; "Dr. Claudius," F. Marion Crawford; "Doubting Heart," Annie Keary; "Deceivers Ever," Mrs. Lovett Cameron; "El Fureidis," author of "The Lamplighter"; "Erema, or my Father's Sin," R. D. Blackmore; "Fairy Land Tales for the Young," Peter Parley; "Face to Face"; "For God and Gold," Corbett; "First Lessons in Natural History"; "The Fortunes of Rachel," E. E. Hale; "The Fall of the Great Republic"; "French Self-taught," A. Sardou; "The Giant's Robe," F. Anstey; "The Growth of the Mind," Reed; "Heartsease" (Vol. I.), Miss Yonge; "Haunted Hearts," author of "The Lamplighter"; "Haco, the Dreamer," William Lime; "History of Greece," Sewell; "Healey, a Romance"; "House of Seven Gables," Hawthorne; "I say No," Wilkie Collins; "John Brent"; "The Jesuit's Ring," Hayes; "Judith Shakespeare," William Black; "John Halifax"; "Knick-knacks," G. Clark; "King Arthur," author of "John Halifax"; "Kate Kennedy," Miss Newby; "Lady Bird," Lady Fullerton; "Lorna Doone," R. D. Blackmore; "Less Black than we're Painted," Payn; "The Last of the Haddons," Mrs. Newman; "The Lamplighter"; "Life and Letters of Fredrika Bremer."

The following books are offered by Miss Chatterine W. Agge, 10 Linden Street, Salem, Mass.:—

"The Sketch Book," Irving; "Crater," Cooper; "Letters and Social Aims," Emerson; "The Greatest Thing in the World," Drummond; "American Classics for Schools," Hawthorne; Macaulay's "Essays," (one volume); "A Child's History of England," Dickens; "Arne," Björnson; "A Year of Miracle," W. C. Gannett; "The Pleasures of Life," Sir John Lubbock.

Some miscellaneous books and magazines are offered by Mrs. L. M. Richards, 3 Colchester Street, Brookline, Mass., and by J. Chapman, 1 Cedar Street, Roxbury, Mass.

The following books are offered by Mrs. M. I. Herron, 8 Westland Avenue, Boston, Mass.: the *Congregationalist* for 1893, odd numbers of *Ladies' Home Journal* for 1891, and some paper-bound novels: "The Three Feathers," by William Black; "The Squire's Darling" and "Her Second Love," by C. M. Braeme; also five volumes of Tennyson's Poems, and the New Testament in four volumes, in large, clear print.

If Miss C. A. Lincoln, who offers *North American Review*, *Forum*, and *Harper's*, will kindly send her address to Mrs. Millet, 150 Charles Street, the offer will appear in the next number of *The Cheerful Letter*.

Miss Cora H. Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass., offers "Chapters in Popular Natural History," by Sir John Lubbock; "Five Little Peppers," by Margaret Sidney; "The Silver City," by Fred. A. Ober; "Yellow Birds," by Ernest Ingersoll; "How Plants behave," by Dr. Gray; and a variety of primers for children.

Miss Frances M. Birtwell, 24 Clinton Street, Cambridgeport, Mass., offers the *Century Magazine* for 1887, complete.

Mrs. J. R. Conant, 42 Marshall Street, Somerville, offers the *Christian Register* weekly, as it comes out.

REQUESTS.

A history of the early voyages of Columbus, and any of the works of Louisa M. Alcott or Charlotte Brontë, are asked for by Mrs. M. Pease, North Hudson, Essex Co., N.Y.

The *New England Magazine* is asked for by Mrs. A. B. Finley, Elba Heights, Pasco Co., Fla. (She lives in the country, and has four small children.)

I would be very glad to have any of the following books sent me. They will be lent to many through this neighborhood. "Dred," "Elsie Venner," "Mill on the Floss," "Huckleberry Finn," "Innocents Abroad," "Roughing It," or any of Sophie May's. I do not mean for all to be sent me, but will be thankful for any of them. Mrs. I. T. Tuck, Holloway, Person Co., N. C.

A book on ornithology, suitable for a boy of sixteen, is asked for by Mrs. D. Knox, Escondido, San Diego Co., Cal.

Mrs. Knox will pay postage if required.

I would indeed feel grateful for a few books, "Quiet Hours" or "Sunshine in the Soul," "In His Name," "Stepping Heavenward." I am a bookless creature. I am very fond of books, and am careful in my treatment of them. Oh, if I could convey an idea of the relief a good book gives me! Mrs. M. E. Oades, Olympia, Wash.

Mrs. M. A. Smith, Bayou Chene P.O., La., asks for the *Chautauquan*. She says, "I have five children, and am living in a lonely swamp."

"Gates Ajar," by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and "A Song of Life," by Margaret W. Morley, are asked for by Mrs. James A. Tyner, 916 North 9th Street, Lincoln, Neb.

The *Youth's Companion* is asked for by Mrs. Sadie Preston, Elba Heights, Pasco Co., Fla.

Mrs. E. M. Seiley, Beaver P.O., St. Landry Parish, La., would be pleased to receive the *Housewife*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, or the *Christian Union*.

"Mrs. Seiley is an invalid, and an old lady, who lives way out in the piney woods. She is too poor to buy reading, though she is very fond of it. She is a good, pious woman; and all reading sent her will be thankfully received."

Mrs. Minda F. Chamberlain, Branch, Orleans Co., Vt., would like to receive the *Century Magazine* from November, 1892. Will pay postage, and loan after reading.

I am on my way to Maine from the hospital, where, through the kindness of friends, I was sent last October. I am very weak now, but hope to be stronger and much more comfortable in time. I must go back to the hospital for another operation, when I get stronger and can earn money. I have passed through a trying winter, but the dear Saviour has been with me through it all.

Do you ever print requests for anything but reading? I collect stamps to sell, and should be pleased to have them sent to me, as I have to earn my living. And I hope to receive good reading, illustrated papers and magazines preferred.

As I have never requested reading through this paper before, I hope to be remembered. If any old friends read this, they can know

I have not forgotten any one, but have been unable to write, lacking in strength and stamps.

I would advise all sufferers to go to a hospital for treatment, and there are many where they can be received free (board and treatment). Miss Florence A. Langley, West Levant, Penobscot Co., Maine.

(Miss Langley collects cancelled stamps, and sells them to firms in New York for the foreign market. She asks to have them cut with a wide margin of paper.)

Will you welcome another stranger to your circle? . . . I enjoy *The Cheerful Letter* ever so much, and at present I am sending them where I think they will bring new subscribers to our kind editor. I have been entirely shut in for six long years from this bright and beautiful world and activity of life. I have just got so I can sit up an hour at most, and cannot stand on my feet five minutes at once. I have one child, Albertine. She is nearly thirteen, and her life is hard on account of my inability; and I thought perhaps some one would like to send her "Robinson Crusoe" or the *Youth's Companion*. If any readers have household papers to spare with articles on fancy work, I would be so grateful. Address, Mrs. R. L. Terry, Speonk, Suffolk Co., N.Y.

(There was not room enough to print the whole of Mrs. Terry's letter, but the secretary will send it to any one interested.)

Dear Madam,—I saw in the *Housewife* that you would send reading matter to all shut-outs that would send address. Will you please send us some reading matter of any kind that you have to spare, as it is very hard to get out here? Yours respectfully, Mrs. Henry Hubman, Emerson, Manitoba, Can.

Mrs. Nevada Brantlett, Dade City, Fla., would like "Young Folks' History of the United States," and any other books for her boy of thirteen.

Olive Smith, Centre Moriches, N.Y., asks for "Romola" and "Doctor Antonio."

Mrs. Elijah Hance, Williamson, Wayne Co., N.Y., asks for "The Scarlet Letter," "The House of Seven Gables," or "Stepping Heavenward." She writes: "My mother and father are old people and shut in. My mother knits lace to sell. She had a cancer

removed from her face last fall. Her eyes are very weak. She is blind in one eye. We knit lace at 25 cents a spool, besides the thread. Our expenses have been very heavy last fall."

("Stepping Heavenward" has been sent.)

Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass., asks for names of subscribers to *The Cheerful Letter* who are willing to send off their copy of this paper to shut-ins or those not able to subscribe for it. We have a long list of addresses of those who would like to receive the paper, and cannot send it to them until more copies are offered by our subscribers. Write directly to Miss Dewson, as above.

Miss Langmaid, our secretary, desires extra copies of *The Cheerful Letter* for October and January. Address, Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

Mrs. A. R. Barber, Northfield, Mass., asks for "The Old Ma'am's Secret."

Mrs. J. Y. Farra, Nicholasville, Ky., writes: "I have been shut in for six months, and am an invalid, having been injured in a railroad accident. I am a mother, having two little girls, aged eight and a half and four. Think your club quite a good thing for so many who need something to cheer and entertain. Please send me 'Stepping Heavenward' and 'A Sage of Sixteen.'"

("Stepping Heavenward" has been sent.)

Miss M. Stenglein, Waterloo, Neb., asks for any good reading matter.

Mrs. Belle Blackey, Pelican Rapids, Otter Tail Co., Minn., asks for "Stepping Heavenward" and "Jane Eyre."

Hollie Cook, Dade City, Fla., asks for "Jane Eyre" and "Tom Brown's School-days at Rugby."

Mrs. M. Pease, North Hudson, Essex Co., N.Y., asks for "The Chaplet of Pearls" and "Patience Strong's Outings." She will pass on to others, or place them in a Lend a Hand library.

Dear Miss Clarke,—Enclosed you will find fifty cents. Please send ——— *The Cheerful Letter*. She is a poor Christian woman, and has a large family of boys, and

very poor health. I want to help our dear little paper. I have been washing for a school-teacher this last five months: he paid me five dollars. I wanted one-tenth to do some good. Besides, I feel like I wanted to help you. She will be so glad to get it every month, and it will be one more for *The Cheerful Letter*. I wanted you to know that I am so thankful to you for your kindness to me, and my friends here are so thankful for the reading I send them.

Have you "The Scarlet Letter" yet? A friend of mine wishes it, Mrs. Oliver Broyles, Endicott, Wash. If you have "Stepping Heavenward" yet, will you send one to Mrs. Nellie Goss, Sanco, Coke Co., Tex. Mine that you sent me has been read by so many; and several others wish it, or I would send it to her. Miss Langmaid sent me "Gentle Measures": it is so nice! You will think I have started out begging, but it is for others. May God bless you, dear friend, for your kindness! I. H. N., Mrs. John Morgan, Dunlor, Wash.

N.B.—Will those friends who send books in answer to these requests kindly remember to write *first* to Mrs. Millet? That is, if you see that some one asks for "Black Beauty" and you have a copy of "Black Beauty" to give, write a postal card "with reply" to Mrs. Millet, saying, Shall I send my copy of "Black Beauty" to such a person? If no one else has sent one, she will answer "yes." If some one else has already offered a copy, Mrs. Millet will write, asking you to reserve yours for the next person who asks. In this way we shall avoid sending several copies of the same book to one person, while the next one who asks may receive none.

LETTERS.

Dear Friend,—The book "Stepping Heavenward," which you so kindly sent Mrs. O. B. Butler, was received to-day. Dear mother died March 4. The last week she suffered more than I can tell. She has often told me how many pleasant hours have been given her by her *Cheerful Letter* friends: she enjoyed their books and letters so much. She could not go out, and they were a great deal of company for her. I have read "Stepping Heavenward" a number of times, and think it one of the best of books. Mrs. Emma L. Swift, Lewiston, Me.

Dear Friend,—A friend is sending me the dear little *Cheerful Letter*, which I enjoy very much; and I am so thankful for it. I have been confined to my bed nearly fourteen years. I would like to join the *Cheerful Letter Society*, as I am sick, live in a lonesome place, also a mother with seven children, four of whom are small, to care for, and very poor so far as this world's goods are concerned. I can work most of the time, and would be pleased to receive gingham, calico, worsted, velvet and silk scraps, also bits of floss and zephyr. I am also trying to collect a half million cancelled stamps, and would be pleased to receive any and all kinds, as I want one of every kind for my album and a half million besides. Now, dear friends, I have nothing to offer in return but thanks and my sympathy and prayers, and you may be sure you have them from my heart. I have had many troubles and trials, to say nothing of what I have suffered; but my dear Saviour helps me to bear them all, and I hope I will one day meet you all in heaven where there is no more pain, trouble, or sorrow, and the inhabitants never say, I am sick. So, with love and kind wishes to all the band in His dear name, I am your shut in friend, Mrs. Anna Teague, Empire, Christian Co., Ky.

Would you be willing to send me "Stepping Heavenward"? I read the book some years ago, and have been longing to reread it. Wish I could afford to buy a copy, but that is not to be thought of; for I am a poor girl, or woman rather, and have been an invalid nearly fifteen years, with spinal disease. I cannot sit up at all, and have to lie in bed all the time, unable to move my feet and limbs. Have to be turned and lifted like a baby. So you see my life is rather sad and lonely. I do love to read. It is my only pastime, with writing letters. Oh, yes, I nearly forgot. If you send books out, do you pay postage both ways? If you do not, then don't send books to me; for I have no money of my own, and what little is given me I must use for other purposes. I'll not be offended if you don't send it to me. But I do want to thank you for kind remembrances at holiday season. I have some books and papers of all kinds. If any one will send me postage, I would be so glad to pass reading on to some other shut-ins. I should think it would be a grand idea for

you to publish the names of members each month. I belong to the Shut-in Society, and think everything of it. We have the *Open Window*. I get some reading from there, and have some letter friends; and they do so much to cheer and brighten my life. I don't know what I should do without the dear society friends, Shut-ins and Associates. My time would be very lonely. If you wish, you can publish in next *Cheerful Letter* my desire to pass on story books and religious papers, such as are sent to me from different ones, to any who send postage. Have some back numbers of *Harper's*, seven years old or more, but the reading is good, and have a year's number of the *Chautauquan* I will send to any who pay postage. This is a long letter. Sincerely yours, Sadie V. Engell, Seward, Scoharie Co., N.Y.

("Stepping Heavenward" has been sent.)

The following letter was written to a member of the *Cheerful Letter Exchange*, and not intended for publication, so that we do not feel at liberty to print the writer's name, but will give it to any one who asks it. Write to the editor, Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Kind Friend,—Your letter came to hand to-day, and I was glad to receive it; for, if ever any one needed a kind or cheering word, it is me. We are in deep trouble. As I told you, mamma and I are both weak. My mother has a tumor in her stomach, and I have ovarian trouble and weak lungs. We are afraid one of them is going fast.

There is nothing to do here for a man but work on a farm. My husband does that, although he is ruptured. You see we are an afflicted family. He gets \$5.32 a week for nine months, and has to save enough from that to keep us the other three months, as there is no work in winter. But, like you, I have some gumption; and we, mamma and I, have done what little crocheting we could get to do. This is not much of a place for fancy work; and we raised a few chickens in spite of the fact that we had no fence, and the neighbors shot them whenever one of them strayed. And, as there was three-fourths of an acre lot and a little house, we thought maybe some day the good Lord would let us get it fenced in and have a few fruit-trees, and we could have a few more comforts. But the little home belonged to

grandma, and she, sweet old soul, died two years ago; and, though we have tried every way to earn, we have only been able to pay ten dollars of her expenses for sickness and death, and there is eighty to be paid to one man. He was here to-day, and he says he cannot wait much longer if we cannot pay him. He will have to sell the house in a month or two. It will not bring more than a hundred dollars, and we will be homeless; for how could we pay rent on the little we have? I might suffer; but my four-year-old daughter and mother—it breaks my heart. I never was so discouraged before, though things have been pretty black; but now I don't know what we can do. I would work day and night at anything I could do; but eighty dollars! it might as well be a thousand, as we are powerless to get it.

We live about sixty miles from Vineland. It is about fifteen miles from Philadelphia. Miss — sent me a nice box of buttons a few days ago: it had her name, but not her address. I did have it, for she kindly sent me some things before; but I lost it. At least, I think she did. So I cannot write to thank her. Will you kindly forward this to her, and then she will understand why I did not write? Besides, I often do not have a penny to spare to buy a postal card.

Yes, I will be very glad of cards and reading. Thank you for the kind thought.

I must close now. Forgive my gloomy letter, but I felt I must tell some one who would feel sorry for me; and, if any of the *Cheerful Letter Band* can tell me some way to earn a little, I will be very grateful, for God knows what will become of us when we have rent to pay. Will you ask those of the band who pray to pray that he may let us keep our home? I know it would be a miracle, but even that is possible to him.

Yours, in distress.

Dear Friend in Christ,—I address you these few lines at the request of an associate of *Open Window*, who kindly sent me the stamped envelope enclosing this from me. I have some religious papers (weeklies) and Christmas number of the *Century Magazine* (quite heavy) which I so much wish some lonely persons to have the comfort of reading that might desire them, but regret sadly that whoever applies must prepay the postage. My circumstances make this compulsory, a

matter which I very much regret; for, besides the pain it inflicts on me at having to still the heart's best impulses, some most worthy ones may not be able from the very same cause to avail themselves of my desire to do them more than all others good. My deepest and best sympathies are with those who are usually most despised and rejected by the world; and, oh, pray for me, Christian friend and sister, that I may be enabled to help in some greatly needed way this especial class. The reading matter which I am endeavoring to have by your help put in *The Cheerful Letter*,—I could not have the happiness of offering it, were it not in December sent me by a sweet Christian woman I. H. N. The good she has done me thiswise she can never know until "the books are opened." Oh, bless God for his saints on earth! and may we all "gather at the River!" I know none others will be sick nor lonely there. The names of my literature are *Christian Instructor*, *Sunday School Times*, *Weekly Witness*, and a few numbers of *Presbyterian publications*, nice choice magazines, etc. I desire an interest in your most earnest prayers that our Father in heaven will be with me in my constant sufferings and trials, and help me to love and serve him better and more humbly; and in return may his tender love and blessings ever over-shadow you! Cordially and affectionately yours (in isolation), Mrs. L. S. Richter, 527 Jay Street, Ottumwa, Ia.

Respected Lady,—I received one of the small papers called *Cheerful Letter*, and I like it very much; but I am not able to subscribe for it. I am an invalid, have not been able to work for almost three years. At times I can sew a little. Am obliged to, when I am able, which is very seldom. And the last year I have done very little even of that, and it is so pleasant to get something to read. My income is three dollars a week. I can get along on that by economizing very close. I am very thankful for that. Anything you can send will be thankfully received. With kind regards. Address, Mrs. V. Leland Williams, Shelton, Mason Co., Wash.

Kind Friends,—Most sincerely I thank every one that has made my life brighter by sending me papers, books, and letters, that surely tell of heartfelt sympathy. I have often felt that I could never be grateful

enough for God's goodness to me. He has sweetly saved my soul; saved, saved to the uttermost; in Jesus, my Saviour, I am saved. I think it wonderful I have not chosen God, but God has chosen me. It is so sweet to trust in Jesus always. My kind friends, I will always remember you all in my prayers. The Cheerful Letter Exchange may seem to you all a little thing: to me it seems great and wonderful. I feel much good will result from your endeavors. Like all that is pure and good, it is of Heaven. I feel so certain of our Saviour's smiles in this soul-stirring and heartfelt sympathy.

Sympathy,—did you ever think how much good we can all do in this world by feeling for one another? Oh, this is, indeed, a perfect wilderness, nothing but woods. The water will soon cover all land in this swamp: it is a dreary place; but, since the ladies have sent me reading, I am better satisfied. Will try to be contented wherever I am. Take heart, lonely ones, for God does care for you all. If you only trust him, he will provide for all your wants in this life, body and mind, and will give you a home in heaven. We must do our duty, and God's part is sure. Though our lot seems very hard at times, we must never lose our faith in God. He may see best to try our patience, and faith, too. God knows best. Mrs. M. A. Smith, Bayou Chene P.O., La.

AN OPEN LETTER.

Dear friends and members of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, this number completes the first year of our little paper's life. At one time it seemed doubtful whether we should continue our publication for another year. But we are glad to say that, at present, the outlook for the future is quite hopeful; and we look forward to a long, useful, and happy life as the organ of the *Cheerful Letter Exchange*. We have no debts, and our subscription list is slowly, but steadily increasing.

As those who have been so kind in helping us will desire to know the results of our year's work, we will say here that it has been *more* successful than we had reason to expect in several important points.

First, we have received a more than cor-

dial welcome from many of those for whose sake the society was organized. From all parts of the country letters have poured in from invalids, lonely people, young mothers, thanking us, and asking for our little paper, showing that we have found the right method of reaching them.

Then, although there is so much to do for all busy and kind-hearted people in the centres of work and thought, the sympathy and help which have been given to our object by those whose hands and hearts are full already have touched us greatly. Without this help we never could have succeeded in already placing ourselves on a firm footing.

And now we hope to do much more and better during the year that is about to begin. We hope for a better organization, and for improvement in several departments of our work. Of plans for the future we will speak in another number of our paper. Meantime, we have only room for this little word of thanks to all who have helped to cheer and comfort our lonely ones, our invalids, little children, and young mothers. It seems a very little; but we have faith to believe that there is a blessing on these crumbs, and that we shall see them increased and multiplied.

L. F. C.

"WAIT TILL THE SKY SPEAKS."—The sky, as we gaze into its blue depths, watch its shifting gray and golden clouds, or behold its stars, has much to tell us. So we can appreciate the pith of Monet's remark to a young artist. Monet had listened quietly while the young man unfolded all his artistic hopes and dreams. Finally, he paused. Then Monet said, "What does the sky say to you?"

"The sky!" repeated the young man. "Why, nothing."

"Then," said Monet, "go home, and give up painting till you hear the sky speak."—*Sent by M. R. Case.*

Those who desire to join the *Cheerful Letter Exchange*, whether to correspond with invalids, young mothers, and lonely people, or to send books, or to *receive* letters, books, etc., are requested to send their names to our secretary, Miss Langmaid. No fee is required for such membership.

Those who desire to receive or to offer books are requested to send such requests or offers to Mrs. Millet, for insertion in the Book Club department of *The Cheerful Letter*. Do not send the book to Mrs. Millet (nor to Miss Langmaid nor Miss Clarke) nor ask Mrs. Millet personally for books. Her office is to print these requests and offers in the Book Club, not to send nor to receive the books themselves.

The editor regrets and apologizes for the fact that she can no longer answer all the personal letters she receives. It has become impossible.

MISCELLANEOUS.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER,"—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.—This is the last number of the year. It would be a great kindness, and would save us much trouble, if our subscribers would renew their subscriptions before June 1. They may be sent to Miss Flora L. Close, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. N.B.—Many members of the Cheerful Letter Exchange subscribe for two numbers,—one for the subscriber, one for a shut-in or one not able to subscribe. Names of those who wish to receive the paper are furnished by Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass.

We have had subscriptions enough to pay our expenses for the year; but, unless they are renewed, they will not carry us much farther. A few have subscribed lately, so that their payments count only on the second year; and so it is still desirable to increase our list.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper, in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Will any one who desires to send a copy of *The Cheerful Letter* to one not able to subscribe, send her address to Miss Dewson, as above?

Will all those friends who are now sending magazines or papers regularly to any one be kind enough to write to Mrs. Millet, as above, giving the address of the recipient as well as the name of the periodical and of the sender? Otherwise, some one who asks for a paper, and does not receive it, may lose the opportunity, and we could obtain one for her by printing her request again; or one who offers may receive no immediate response, and could a month later still send the periodical offered.

N.B.—Those who have already sent this information, either to Miss Langmaid or to Mrs. Millet, need not write again. It is only from those who have not written that we desire to hear.

To become a member of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, it is necessary:—

First, either to be a lonely person, or invalid, a young mother (or a mother of any age, who feels enough interest to desire to join the society), or to be in sympathy with these, and desire to write letters, send reading, or cheer their lives in any way.

Second, to send your names to our secretary, Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass., saying that you desire to become a member.

It is also desirable (although not necessary for each individual) to take *The Cheerful Letter*, as this is the medium of communication.

"What contributions do you desire for *The Cheerful Letter*?"

Answer. First and most, we desire letters from our far-off correspondents, telling us something about themselves, letters that we may print in *The Cheerful Letter*, signed with the name of the writer.

Next, we want short articles, answering the questions in the Mothers' Council, and on the questions in the Bible Class and History Class.

Third, we want more of our Cheerful Letter Exchange members to offer books in the Book Club, especially good books on American history.